

2005 IATE Poetry and Prose Contest

Poems of Exceptional Merit

Marki Lea Guzlas, 11th grade
Lake Forest High School
Lake Forest, Illinois
Teacher, Carolyn R. Reinglass

She Craves the Sun

reaching up, up, up to the light.
Like a young child, she stretches her paper-thin corners up
to grab at the butterscotch candy,
the wrapper crinkling between her fingers.
She clenches the candy rays, warm and sticky, as they melt in her palms,
and she savors the gooey, sweet flavor.
Lapping up the buttery rays,
she vies for the sun-drenched spot;
she spreads the scalloped edges of her artichoke-green skin,
seeking to collect each fattening beam.

Honking, yelling, and ringing—cars, people, and cell phones fade;
a palette of melancholy indigo and navy permeates the deteriorating day;
yet,
warm patches on her skin are remembrances of her afternoon indulgence
in telltale hints of gold candy hidden amongst her tiny teeth.

As the artichoke tones of her skin weaken, overtaken by auburns and pumpkin-oranges,
the bright flash of a cyclist's lime nylon speeding below overshadows her;
the olive crocodile shoe peeking from the slender pant leg overshadows her;
the jingling green dog leash at six o'clock every morning overshadows her.

Pulling away from the bumblebee road stripes stinging at her heels,
she scrabbles for a hold, reaches for *her* limb,
but slips away.

Pulled toward the paved concrete she detaches, droops,
twists and twirls,
circle after circle;
dizzy.

She folds onto the ground
and joins the pile of litter nestled against the curb:
a love letter dropped in frustration,
empty Styrofoam cups carelessly tossed over a shoulder,
all forgotten, scuffed into a corner of unwanted pieces.

In a moment of fleeting exhilaration,
the caress of the wind twirls her up and replaces the grainy, scratchy surface;
she is airborne once more.

But then, she crumples and dries;
the last potato chip in a bag,
savored and prized,
But then, she is gone and forgotten in the final crunches,
breaking below the feet of passerby. She craved.